

University of California, Davis
Department of Philosophy
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
PHI 220, Winter 2011
2275 SSH, Tues 3:10-6 PM

Contact information

Instructor: Professor Roberta Millstein

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Office Hours: Tues 12:30-1:30 PM, Thurs 3:10-4:10 PM, and by appointment

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Required readings

Required (and optional) readings available on course website on SmartSite, <https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/>

Course description

Two central terms in environmental ethics, conservation biology, environmental policy, and related areas are *biodiversity* and *sustainability*. Biodiversity is supposed to be that which we should strive to preserve; sustainability is supposed to be our goal. Yet both are notoriously difficult to define. They are also arguably both value-laden terms, yet the values that they presuppose are also ambiguous. So, what *is* biodiversity and what *is* sustainability? Are biodiversity and sustainability important, and if so, why? In other words, what values support them? And how do these questions overlap – in other words, does what we value affect how the terms are defined? This graduate seminar will explore these and related questions.

Course requirements

Your grade will be based on the following:

10% - In-class participation

10% - Online participation

20% - Coordination of seminars

60% - Term paper - due by 6 PM on Saturday, March 24

In-class participation - You are expected to come to all classes having done the readings and you are expected to participate in class discussions.

Online participation - Post to the SmartSite Forums **by 12 PM before every seminar** concerning the readings for the day – ask questions, raise objections, give reflections, etc.

Coordination of seminars: You will coordinate at least one (probably more) seminar using a visual aid such as handout or PowerPoint-type slides – contact me before class for help with photocopying or projector set up. Your job as coordinator is to stimulate and lead discussion. So, you should **1)** Give enough of a summary of the readings to stimulate discussion, but don't attempt a point-by-point summary (we can always turn to the article during discussion if necessary). Be sure to provide an overview of the overall argument. Seek out additional references if necessary. And, **2)** raise issues for discussion (not simply, "what

did you think about that?"). As coordinator, it is OK if there are parts of the articles that you didn't understand; ask those questions for group discussion. **Note:** Students taking the course for ECL 290 credit will do one formal, "meeting-style" presentation of at least 15 minutes prior to leading discussion.

Term paper: Your paper may analyze any of the readings discussed in class, any of the optional readings, or offshoots of those readings (follow the citations of class readings or look for papers that cite the class readings). Contact me if you wish to do something other than the above. A sketch/outline of your term paper is due by Saturday, **March 10**.

Prepare your paper (more or less) in the style of a *Philosophy of Science* article. Your paper should be approximately 5000 words (the length of a Philosophy of Science Association conference paper).

Important note on plagiarism/cheating: It is a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct to turn in work that is not your own. This includes: turning in the work of another student with your name on it, buying/copying a paper off the Internet, using the words *or* ideas of others without proper quotation and citation. In accordance with Regulation 550 of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate, **a grade of "0" will be assigned to assignments on which cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty is admitted or determined to have occurred by proper adjudication.** If you have trouble with the class material or have personal issues that prevent you from doing your work, come talk to me.

Tentative Schedule - All dates and readings are subject to change.

Date	Author-year	Paper/chapter title	Coor.
Jan 10	United Nations	Decade on Biodiversity - Official Video	RLM
	Gaston 2004	What is biodiversity?	RLM
Jan 17	Callicott et al. 1999	Current normative concepts in conservation	
	Norton 1994	On what we should save: The role of cultures in determining conservation targets	
Jan 24	Roebuck and Phifer 1999	The persistence of positivism in conservation biology	
	Sarkar 2002	Defining "biodiversity": Assessing biodiversity	
Jan 31	Sober 1986	Philosophical problems for environmentalism	
	Callicott 1986	On the intrinsic value of nonhuman species	
Feb 7	Regan 1986	Duties of preservation	
	Norton 2000	Biodiversity and environmental values: in search of a universal earth ethic	
Feb 14	Pezzey 1992	Sustainability: an interdisciplinary guide	
	Blatz 1992	The very idea of sustainability	
Feb 21	Vanderheiden 2008	Two conceptions of sustainability	
	O'Connor 2006	The 'four spheres' framework for sustainability	
Feb 28	Newton and Freyfogle 2005	Sustainability: a dissent	
	Frazier 1997	Sustainable development: Modern elixir or sack dress?	
Mar 6	Harding 2006	Ecologically sustainable development: origins, implementation and challenges	
	Goodland 1995	The concept of environmental sustainability	
	Lubchenco et al. 1991	The sustainable biosphere initiative: An ecological research agenda	
Mar 13	Callicott and Mumford 1997	Ecological sustainability as a conservation concept	
	Chapin et al. 1996	Principles of ecosystem sustainability	
	Upham 2000	Scientific consensus on sustainability	
	Daly 1992	Allocation, distribution, and scale: towards an economics that is efficient, just, and sustainable	